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Spalding - The 250th Anniversary of
the Settlement of Dover, N. H. - 1873

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A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN 1873

IN THE FIRST CHURCH OF DOVER, MAY 18, 1873.

ON THE

Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary

OF THE

SETTLEMENT IN DOVER, N. H.

BY GEORGE B. SPALDING.

MINISTER OF THE FIRST CHURCH,
DOVER, N. H.

DOVER, N. H.

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DISCOURSE.

THE GLORY OF CHILDREN IS THEIR FATHERS. *Proverbs 17: 6.*

We live in a country whose national history has not yet reached its first centennial. Our oldest institutions are almost of yesterday. Our most ancient structures are free from the moss and stains of age. Our ideas, and associations, and even our memories are within the boundaries of the near and present. It is, therefore, difficult for us to connect ourselves with an event which antedates by centuries the lives of most of us, an event which is farther removed from the birthday of the nation than that day is removed from the present.

Two Hundred and Fifty years ago! Then James the First was on the throne of England, nearing the end of his vices and stupidities. Shakespeare was but just resting in his tomb from his immortal labors. Galileo was getting ready his heretical solar system to lay at the feet of the newly elected Pope. Bacon still lived, and wrote with all his wonted profundity of thought and splendor of eloquence. Milton, that year, a youth of marvelous beauty,* entered

the University at Cambridge. "Rare Ben Johnson" was busy with his court masques and comedies. Sidney was a boy playing at his mother's feet.

Here, this side the great water, a feeble colony of Englishmen was holding its position on the Virginian coast at a vast expenditure of money and a great sacrifice of human life. That very year they were fighting the Indians through tangled woods and swamps. That very year a feebler colony of Englishmen was passing a third year on the Massachusetts coast, living on five kernels of corn to the individual.* In May of that year, two hundred and fifty years ago this Sabbath, one hundred persons, weak with sickness and starvation, laid down at night "not knowing," according to their own record, "where to have a Bit in the Morning," having neither Bread nor Corn; yet," adds the writer, "we bear our Wants with Cheerfulness, and rest on Providence."†

In the same year and month of May, a boat from an English ship came up the river Piscataqua. It bore a little company of men, none of whom are known to us by name, except two brothers, Edward and William Hilton.‡ They steered straight on up the broad stream until they came to a point of land made by the flowing in of another river.

It was not the first time that these waters had been stirred by a foreign keel, and, perhaps, it was not the first time that this point of land had been trodden by foreign feet. Twenty years before this, Captain Martin Pring had sailed up this channel "3 or 4 leagues,"—perhaps ten miles,—and had explored its banks for sassafras, which was held in high estimation in Europe for its aromatic and medicinal

*Bancroft's Hist. of U. S. Little, Brown & Co. Vol. 1, p. 315.

†Prince's Annals of N. E., first edition, vol. 1, p. 135.

‡Prince's Annals, vol. 1, p. 134.

qualities. Nine years before, the renowned Capt. John Smith had sailed along its wooded banks, and, on his return, had written in admiration of "the deep waters of Piscataqua."*

But the keel which now grated along the shore until it rested in some nook of the land turned not back. The two brothers, with their few associates, were soon "lifting up axes upon the thick trees." They threw up a rude house or two. Into them they gathered the articles and instruments, which they had brought with them, necessary for a fishery. They came to stay. And so Dover was born and cradled, and put to rest for at least eight years. At the end of that time, it could boast the possession of only three houses.

Let us recall the features of the scene which these founders gazed upon. The same sky of blue and cloud; the same unrivalled water view, of rivers with their shining arms, and great placid bays, all pulsing with the ocean's life; the same rounded mountain and swelling hills; all this, which fills us at each new beholding with increased admiration, met their eyes also. But the scene to them was wilder, fuller and richer. The "Neck," now so bare, was clothed from summit down to the water's edge with lordly pines and oaks, whose dense foliage swayed to and fro in the wind and sighed responsive to the ocean's roar. Innumerable trailing vines, many of them flaunting in gayest colors, interlaced the trees and rendered passage difficult. The deer had their well worn paths to the springs and grasses of the lower land. The rivers were filled with fish, and with all kind of water fowls. It was a scene which, to those men accustomed to the open, cultivated fields of England, must have

*Bancroft's Hist. of U. S., vol. 1, p. 114. Ibid, p. 328.

been almost terrible in its beauty. Probably, at that time, there were only a few Indians in the region. Years before it must have been a favorite place to them. But the entire eastern coast of New England, just before its settlement by white men, had been swept clean of its inhabitants by a great pestilence. The Pilgrims found in the neighborhood of Plymouth vast burial grounds, and bleaching bones scattered everywhere.* The Indians whom they saw were few in number, the fragments of once powerful tribes. There was no savage whoop to smite with fear the Hiltons and their companions. They were startled by no other sound than the mighty crash of some monarch tree, which, at some moment of profound stillness, having reached the measure of its days, trembled and fell, ringing its own knell through all the solitude around. Unmolested and unobserved, the white invaders plied their occupations, curing fish and furs, and lumbering along the rivers' banks. The elder Hilton, Edward, is spoken of by Winthrop "as a gentleman of good judgment." Neither of them is supposed to have been a Puritan. They came here in the interests of Capt. John Mason, who had a claim to the region under a royal grant. Capt. Mason was a strong Churchman, and it may be presumed that the Hiltons were like minded. The few accessions made during the first eight years were from a class of men with whom the Puritans had no sympathy either upon religion or moral grounds. In Prince's New England Chronology, I find this very significant entry, under date of Aug. 20th, 1630. Speaking of some who returned from the Plymouth Colony to England on account of sickness and threatened famine, and "of dislike of our Government, which restrained and punished their Excesses," the annalist

*Prince's Annals of N. E., vol. 1, p. 106.

goes on to say that "others, also, afterwards hearing of Men of their own Disposition at *Pascataway*, went from us to them: whereby, tho' our numbers were lessened, yet we accounted ourselves nothing weakened by their Removal."* It is almost certain that Dover got some recruits from this company.

In 1631, the ownership of the plantation passed to Lords Say and Brooks and others. Capt. Wiggin, who had been the agent of the old company and was continued in the same office by the new one, went back to England to procure more ample means for carrying on the plantation. In the fall of 1633, the Captain returned, having with him a number of families from the west of England, some of whom, according to Hubbard, were "of good estate and of some account for religion."

Among them was REV. WILLIAM LEVERIDGE. He was a graduate of Emanuel College, Cambridge. According to Winthrop he was "a godly minister." Belknap writes of him as "a worthy and able *Puritan* minister."

This first minister must have entered upon his work with great enthusiasm and energy. The settlers who came with him divided the lower part of the "Neck" into lots, with reference to building up "a compact town." It must have been under the inspiration of their minister that a meeting-house was first erected. It was placed upon the most elevated site, crowning the little settlement, and giving to it whatever grace and glory it might boast. It was a rude structure of logs and mud, but, like the temple of old, it was "beautiful for situation."

The place where the first church was built should forever remain sacred to us, and to our children after us. When

*Prince's Annals of N. E., vol. 1, p. 246.

the magnificent temple was reared by Solomon, the glory of its marble walls, its golden pinnacles, and its precious wood could not eclipse the glory of the rude threshing floor of Araunah, where God appeared to David his father, and where his father first raised the altar of worship. That soul among us is wanting in some most precious quality that has no reverence for yonder spot where the fathers prayed and worshiped. I love to linger in thought around the place. I think of those hard, rough men and the scarcely gentler women, at the sound of the drum leaving their huts at the rivers' banks, mounting the hill, perhaps stopping at the way-side spring which still flows, entering in below the low porch, and gathering within the rude audience-room. There are some who love better the stately ritual of "the Church" service. There are others who care little for any service. There are a few who have felt the sting of Church bigotry and persecution in their English homes, and are ready, with large, grateful hearts, for the free and simple service to which their "Puritan minister" will lead them. I think of him, educated within the classic walls of the great English University, a man of scholarly tastes and acquirements, who had already won honors in the land of Shakspeare and Bacon, in this log church in the wilderness, lifting his hands to prayer above those untaught men, and, out of the love for Christ which glowed within him, striving to shape their roughness into the grace of a Christian faith and living. We catch his earnest, tender tones in prayer, his learned exposition and solemn appeal in sermon, and the strange song of their united praise.

But the voice crying in the wilderness, like his of old, cried in vain. The minister lacked both the spiritual and material support of his people, and in less than two years withdrew to Boston, where he was admitted a member of

the first church. He died at Newton, L. I., after a life of patient, heroic service, leaving behind him a commentary on a large part of the Old Testament, a monument of his scholarship and piety which is still preserved among the records of that ancient town.*

After this, for two or more years, the people were without religious instruction. In the trade of fish, furs and lumber, and in the cultivation of corn, the plantation became somewhat flourishing. During all these early years, the settlers here were under the necessity of carrying their corn to the windmill in Boston to be ground.

In 1637, there came up from Massachusetts a strange character, another one of those men who could not endure the rigor of the Puritan's manners and laws. GEORGE BURDET, had been a colleague minister in the Established Church at Yarmouth, England. Somehow he had gotten into citizenship at Salem, Mass., and had even preached there, but he thought that there would be ampler room for his free conscience and morals in the Dover plantation.† He found here two quite distinct elements, an Episcopal and a Puritan one.‡

*Thompson's Long Isl., vol. 1, p. 430. Ricker, Hist. of Newtown, L. I., 53, 98.

†Winthrop's N. E., vol. 1, p. 332, note.

‡The early settlers of Dover and Portsmouth and of the Isles of Shoals were attached to the Church of England. They were thorough-going royalists. How bitterly they hated the Parliament against the king, and the Puritans of Massachusetts against the Church of England, how vast were the projects of some of their leaders, looking to the establishment of Episcopacy and monarchy in these northern regions, is seen in no little part of the annals and correspondence of those days. In a historical sketch of the Isles of Shoals, by John Scribner Jenness, published by Hurd & Houghton, there is a very interesting and most significant reference to this matter. We refer the reader especially to chapters VI. and X. In Dover there were those whose sympathies were with the Bay Company and the independent ideas, both civil and religious, which the Puritans represented. These, for the most part, were the men who came over with the "Puritan minister," Mr. Leveridge. The fact that there existed here in Dover these two parties, representing principles and politics thus antagonistic, is the true key for our solution of the strange events which now open upon us.

He began at once to preach and also to intrigue. He aspired to be a sort of Pope, uniting in himself both the spiritual and temporal headships. And he succeeded. He set the people against Governor Wiggim and got himself elected to his office. He then put himself into correspondence with Archbishop Laud, the bitterest and meanest of all the Puritan's many foes. In his letters he tried to show that the men of Massachusetts were aiming to establish an independent nationality.* What personal ambition underlay all this abominable hypocrisy and lying can only be guessed at. Perhaps he aimed at a bishopric here in North America! But in this the prelatical pastor and politician failed. A letter of his to the English prelate was intercepted. His treachery was thus exposed. He withdrew into Maine. He afterwards went back to England, took sides with the royalists against the parliamentary forces, was taken prisoner, and this is the last known of him.

Before Burdet left Dover, another even more conspicuous figure appeared on the stage, through whom this increasing difference between the Puritan and prelatical elements issued in a direct collision and so was hastened on to due settlement.

There came to Boston, one HANSERD KNOLLYS, a graduate of Cambridge, England. "He had received ordination from the Bishop of Peterborough, but was afterwards a zealous opposer of Episcopacy and the liturgy."† In July, 1638, he arrived at Boston. He was without money. His own statement is, "I was necessitated to work daily with my hoe for the space of almost three weeks." At the invitation of "some of the more religious" here, he came to Dover. Dr. Quint, writing upon this subject, thus concisely states the condition of affairs in Dover at the coming of Mr.

*Winthrop's Hist. of N. E., vol. 1, pp. 358, 359.

†Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. 2, pp. 368, 369.

Knollys: "He found a settlement originated under Episcopal auspices, though enlarged under other influences; a people mixed in their character, none of them emigrants for conscience' sake, and none of them Puritans of the Bay type, the settlement a refuge for men who could not endure the Massachusetts rigor; no church organized after fifteen years of colonial life; and a minister who, in spirit a churchman, was corresponding with Archbishop Laud, and who was supported by a portion of the people."

"Of some of the best minded," says Winthrop, "he gathered a church." This refers to the *organization* of the church, of *this* church, in January, 1639, that is, 234 years ago!*

And just here, because in these last days it has been claimed that this venerable church was organized by a Baptist minister as a Baptist church, or that it soon became a Baptist church under him, and because this claim has been given a sort of weight and respectability by being allowed a place in Dr. Sprague's distinguished work, "The Annals of the American Churches," it must have some notice.

There is no hint anywhere found that Knollys was a Baptist before his coming to America. Winthrop, who speaks with great particularity of him, and with an evident dislike of him which would have led him to charge Knollys with all that he was guilty of, if not something more, never speaks of him as being a Baptist. He charges him with holding "some of Mrs. Hutchinson's opinion," that is, with being an antinomian.† In all the controversy which raged so fiercely here in Dover, divided the people, tore the

*Dr. Quint, in his *Hist. Mem.*, No. 44: "It is evident that the church was organized within a few days, immediately following 13 January, 1638-9, O. S., or 24 January, 1639, as we should reckon it. The time can not be *exactly* ascertained.

†Winthrop's *Hist. N. E.*, vol. 1, p. 351.

church, and involved in itself the lively interest and the special interference of the Massachusetts people, there is never a word in any record of it that affords a fact, or even a hint, out of which this Baptist theorizer spins his dream.

For a masterly refutation of this absurd claim, I commend you to an article by a distinguished son of this church, who is greatly jealous of the mother's fame and honor.*

The truth is, the conflict which was fought out within the walls of the old church and along the single street of Dover, was the same in character with that which had been raging for half a century in England, and which was yet to soak with the blood of its noblest citizens many of its fair fields.

Hanserd Knollys was a Puritan. Hatred of the English established church had been generated in him by the persecutions which began to be brought against him from that quarter from the day when he renounced the ordination which he had received from its hands. Herbert Skeats, in his History, says that Knollys knew from experience, even at the first, all that Church persecution could tell. And when he fled from it, the High Commission Court, in Charles the First's time, followed him into New England.† He came to Dover, organized a church, and began preaching, surrounded by the same prelatical tendencies and influences the nature of which he knew well of in his English home. But those tendencies and influences were soon to gather head, and challenge from him, and others like him, stout and successful opposition.

THOMAS LARKHAM in this year, 1640, came to Dover. He

*The Congregational Quarterly, January, 1871. Article entitled Hanserd Knollys in Sprague's Annals. By Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D.

†A Hist. of The Free Churches of England, Herbert S. Skeats, second edition, London: Arthur Miall, p. 155.

had been an Episcopal minister at Northam, England. That he still retained his church notions is evident from the fact, as recorded by Winthrop, on Larkham's arrival, "that he was a man not savouring the right way of church discipline," and again, from the fact as recorded by Hubbard, who calls him, in reference to Burdet, "another churchman." Mr. Larkham, finding the Massachusetts Puritanism uncongenial to him, came up to Dover. He was a man of considerable wealth, and, buying some of the shares in the plantation company, he became greatly influential. This is seen in the fact that he persuaded the people here to change the name of their town to Northam, this last being the name of his English home.* He was a man of brilliant speech and of popular address. The people began to want him as a preacher. Knollys was obliged to retire before him, and Mr. Larkham took the pulpit. Here he discovered his church notions at once and in a very marked way. Winthrop says "he received into the church all that offered themselves, though men notoriously scandalous and ignorant, so they would promise amendment." This usage was square against the Puritan idea. Its prevalence in the English church was one ground for our fathers' separation from it. They, as *Puritans*, aimed at a pure church. Here Knollys met him denouncing his practice. But Larkham went on carrying his prelatical notions still further.† In his baptism of children, he signed them with a cross, and regarded them as regenerated by the rite. This was a practice and a notion which the Puritans had protested against from the first. He buried the dead according to the English

*Before this it was called Cochecho [Indian, Plunging Water] or Hilton's Point. Note 1, p. 85, vol. 1. Provincial Papers, New Hampshire.

†Winthrop's Hist. of N. E., vol. 2, p. 33.

‡Lechford as quoted by Savage in note to Winthrop's Hist., 2 vol., p. 32.

forms. The Puritans buried without even a prayer.

Now came the conflict in this obscure church and town, the same which already was raging in Scotland, and which this very year, transferred beyond the Tweed, was destined to convulse England from end to end; a conflict which here as well as there involved principles entering into the very nature and form of government, and which, as it might end, would give shape to the civil and political institutions and the character itself of the two people who, in the providence of God, were called to rule, each its half of the world!

The Puritan Knollys and his adherents rose up and excommunicated the Churchman Larkham and some of his followers. Larkham appealed to the magistrates, who summoned the Knollys party to appear and answer for their action. Capt. Underhill, who sided with the Puritans, marshalled them into military array. They marched up the street towards the court room, perhaps the meeting-house, the Puritan minister going in advance armed with a pistol, and bearing a Bible mounted on a halberd for an ensign.* Larkham and his party declined the challenge, but sent down the river to the Episcopal plantation at Portsmouth for aid. The field of contest was not within the province or jurisdiction of Portsmouth. But the Episcopal Governor came up at once in a boat, with an armed party, to the assistance of the imperiled churchmen. Knollys was besieged in his own house, till a court was summoned, when the Governor, sitting in judgment, found Underhill and his party guilty of riot, and, fining them, banished them from the plantation. Appeal was made by the Puritans to the Massachusetts colony. Simon Bradstreet, Esq., Timothy Dalton, of Hamp-

*Winthrop's Hist. of N. E., vol. 2, p. 33.

ton, and the famous Hugh Peters, then minister of Salem, were sent as commissioners by the Governor of Massachusetts. They came on foot to Dover. Having thoroughly investigated the troubles here, and finding both parties more or less in fault, they terminated the affair by revoking the excommunication of Larkham and the fines and banishment of the other party.*

I have thus carefully rehearsed this passage in the early history of Dover, not to stir a feeling of animosity against any church or party of to-day. These events and these men belong to the history of a past which we to-day are living over. No review would be at all complete and truthful, which overlooked this most significant affair. In itself this controversy held an important place in its time, engrossing the attention and inflaming the passions of men beyond any other event that happened in that generation. But it has a place of greater meaning and importance than the immediate circumstances which surrounded it would seem to indicate. It was a quarrel between Churchmen and Puritans in respect not only to ecclesiastical power, but in respect to civil and political power also. It terminated not only in putting this ancient church forevermore under the name and the principles of Puritan Congregationalism, but it ended in putting the civil government of this Dover plantation, and perhaps eventually of New Hampshire itself, in harmony with the government and political principles of the other New England colonies. There were men here who hated Massachusetts. They sympathized with the Portsmouth plantation, whose people, Adams in his *Annals of Portsmouth* says, "were not puritanical, but retained their attachment to the Church of England." These men,

*Belknap's *Hist. of N. H.*, Farmer's edition, p. 26.

both here and in Portsmouth, were in constant correspondence with men high in the church and royal interests in England, who purposed to crush the growing liberty and independence of the Puritan colonies. Had these men triumphed in this most critical time in the history of the church and plantation, there can be no doubt that the history of New Hampshire down to the war of the Revolution, and far beyond that event, would have been greatly different from what it now is. The defeat of Larkham was speedily followed by a union of the New Hampshire plantations with the Massachusetts colony. Two years after, they entered into that first confederacy which included all the colonies of New England and which continued for nearly forty years. Of this union it has been finely said, "it was the prototype of the confederacy of the States during the revolution, which was, in fact, the germ and vivifying principle of our existence as a nation."

Of Hanserd Knollys I must say a word. Both Larkham and Knollys were charged with gross immorality. Dr. Quint, who has thoroughly examined the matter, unhesitatingly pronounces the accusation against Knollys false, and is "inclined to doubt" that against Larkham. In respect to the former he says, "His whole life gives the lie to the charge which Winthrop had heard, and incautiously recorded, of gross immorality in Dover. That Knollys commenced a suit for slander, should have some bearing. That Hugh Peter should send a letter from Dover by Knollys, when the latter was on his way to Boston, earnestly recommending him, is a clear refutation. Nor could a wicked man in his latter days say, 'My wilderness, sea, city and prison mercies, afford me many and strong consolations. The spiritual sights of the glory of God, the divine sweetness of the spiritual and providential presence of my Lord

Jesus Christ, and the comforts and joys of the Eternal Spirit, communicated to my soul, . . . have so often and so powerfully revived, refreshed and strengthened my heart in the days of my pilgrimage, trials and sufferings, that the sense, yea, the life and sweetness thereof, abides still upon my heart.'” In times when irreligious men and haters of ministers were compelled by law to pay for the minister's support, ministers were fair targets for slanderous and lying tongues, and a false rumor outraveled the truth as fast then as it does in these days of daily papers and telegrams.

Knollys went back to England. He became identified with the Baptists. For fifty years he bore his testimony to the truth which was in him. For almost fifty years he was subject to a pitiless persecution. He gathered an immense congregation in London. He was a chaplain in Cromwell's army. He was known widely for his scholarship and his fervid piety.* But hatred and bigotry begirt him round as with fire. He was stoned out of a pulpit in Suffolk by the Presbyterians. He was imprisoned again and again by the royalists. He wandered a fugitive on the continent; but he was faithful until death. When he was ninety-one years old the Toleration Act was passed, and for two years he knew for the first time the blessing of religious liberty. He then passed from earth “in a transport of joy.” His body lies buried in Bunhill Fields, where lie so many of England's sainted heroes. God grant us to be as pure in life, as brave in speech, as patient in suffering, as joyful in death and as

*Hist. of the Free Churches of England, Herbert S. Skeats, p. 155.

Hist. of the Puritans, Neal, vol. 2, pp. 368, 370.

Skeats says, “He was, perhaps, the most active preacher in the denomination—preaching for forty years, in prison and out of it, seldom less than three or four times a week. His scholarship adorned all his sermons and all his writings.”

sure of heaven as was the first minister of this venerable church!

Dover, having placed herself under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, appealed to the courts there for a minister. In answer to this request DAVID MAUD was sent here in 1642. He was a graduate of Emanuel College, Cambridge. According to Hubbard the historian, Mr. Maud was "a learned man and of serious spirit and of a quiet, peaceable disposition." Under his ministry, continued until his death took place in 1655, the church was prospered. During his time a new Meeting-house was built by Major Waldron on the site of the old one. This building is thus described in the writing of the day, as "forty foot longe, twenty-six foote wide, sixteen foot studd, with six windows, two doores fitt for such a house, with a tile covering, and all the walls planck." The support of the minister was met by an annual payment of fifty pounds in money and the use of a house and land.

JOHN REYNER succeeded Mr. Maud in the ministry. He came to Dover in 1655 from Plymouth, where he had been settled eighteen years. The next year a Meeting-house was erected at Oyster river for the accommodation of the people living in Durham. The agreement between the two parishes was that £100 should be raised for two ministers who might "exchange as often as they should agree." Probably these two ministers were represented in the sole person of Mr. Reyner until in 1667 he was assisted in his work by his son. The minister's salary in 1658 was £120, a part of which was payable in provisions rated as follows: beef 3 1-2 d. per pound, pork 4 1-2 d., wheat 6 s. per bushel, malt 5 s., peas 5 s. In 1659 a house was given to Mr. Reyner and his heirs. In 1669, perhaps to meet the wants of this younger minis-

ter, it was voted at a "Publick Town meeting that there shall be a minister's house built upon dover neck the dimensions is as followeth that is to say 44 f. in length 20 foot wide 14 foot between joist and joist with a stak of Brick chimneys and a sellar of 16 foot squaer, this house to be Buildd at the charge of the hole town in general."* During the ministry of the elder Reyner the drum used for summoning the people to meeting was displaced by a bell which was imported by Major Waldron.

This plantation of Dover was held by grant by Capt. Mason. At the time when he made the purchase from the council of Plymouth his idea was to become a proprietor of a vast manor which should yield to him, through rentals and taxes, a revenue fit for royalty. It was a dream of wildest ambition. It was impossible of accomplishment. But the effort to make good this royal prerogative, persisted in through the life of Mason and continued through more than a century after by others who inherited or purchased these claims, was a source of immense litigation and trouble to the settlers of Dover. They claimed the land by purchase from the original owners, the Indians. They would not recognize the agents of the foreign proprietors. They would not be taxed. They would cut trees, no matter how many arrow heads, the sign of the foreign claimants, were put upon them. They had what they called "swamp laws," which were much more liberal in their provisions than were those of the proprietors' enacting.

The leading spirit in the long and relentless resistance to these English claimants was RICHARD WALDRON. He was a man of indomitable courage, vast tact, and unconquerable will, he was more than a match for the score of agents and

*Dover Town Records.

governors sent over to enforce the rights of English owners. It was sometimes possible to obtain in the courts judgments against the titles of occupants, but it was exceedingly dangerous to levy an execution. An officer of deputy-governor Barefoote, in attempting to carry out a judgment of the court, was forcibly resisted and obliged to relinquish his purpose. Warrants were then issued against these rioters, and the sheriff with his attendants attempted to seize them whilst they were attending service in the old Meeting-house. Immediately there was a great uproar in the congregation. The sermon was stopped. A young heroine, whose name, unfortunately for her descendants, is not mentioned, seized a Bible and hurling it at the head of one of the officers, brought him to the floor. They were all so roughly handled, says the historian, "that they were glad to escape with their lives."* As late as 1746 these rights, which were originally conferred upon Mason in 1623, were sold to twelve citizens of this State, and, under their titles, not a little land in this part of New Hampshire is held to-day.†

As early as 1662 the Quakers made their appearance in Dover. The Puritan had brought his hatred of these men with him from England. There, notwithstanding the purity of their lives and the truth of their principles, they had given some grounds for the hostility with which they were regarded by both Churchman and Puritan. Skeats, in his admirable history, says of the Quakers, after eulogizing their purity, enthusiasm and piety, "had they abstained from attacking other sects they would probably, in the time of the Commonwealth, not have been attacked; but when they at-

*Belknap's Hist., p. 114.

†Dr. Quint's article in the Congregational Quarterly, January, 1871, on Hanserd Knollys.

tended places of worship and publicly assailed both the preachers and their doctrines, they excited an animosity which fell little short of fury." The New England Puritans regarded the Quakers as constituting a most dangerous element among them, and in the spirit of the age they persecuted them with relentless cruelty. The arrival of these men at Dover caused a great excitement. The inhabitants petitioned for "reliefe against the spreading of their wicked errors" and "ordered that Capt. Richard Waldron shall and here be impowered to act in the execution of the lawes of this jurisdiction against all criminall offenders."* In answer to this, Capt. Waldron issued his warrant, and three, at least, of these inoffensive people were whipped out of town. The same results followed this insane persecution which had already followed a like persecution in England. The English historian writes, "The Quakers were whipped and imprisoned, put in stocks, pilloried, and made subject to every personal indignity, but they still increased in numbers with an unexampled rapidity." So here in Dover, "where only, within this Province, the Quakers were persecuted, that sect has flourished perhaps to a greater extent than in any other town in New Hampshire."† The Quakers were able to build a Meeting-house at Dover Neck in 1700, and to-day they hold a respectable position in the community.

In visiting the site of the old Meeting-house one must needs "mark well her bulwarks." The remains of her ancient fortifications are still visible. As early as 1667 the Meeting-house was surrounded with a fortification made of logs built upon an earthen entrenchment. It was a hun-

*Provincial Papers New Hampshire, vol. 1, p. 243.

†Coll. N. H. Hist. Soc., vol. 2, p. 45.

dred feet square, and, at two diagonal corners there were projections, circular in form, which probably were surmounted with towers. Having recently gone over this entire region for personal observation, and having gleaned from the oldest inhabitants all the traditional knowledge which they possessed of the matter, I have formed an idea of the situation of the early settlement which I venture to lay before you. The houses of the early inhabitants were built down on the lower lands which meet the two rivers. Remains of what seem to be cellars are still visible. The Meeting-house was purposely built on the high ground, not only for the sentiment of the thing, but more particularly as affording an outlook over the houses below and the entire region around. The vast advantage which such an elevated site would afford is at once apparent in view of the dreadful circumstances which necessitated this fortification of the place. Standing in the angle-towers of the entrenchment a sentinel in the northwest corner could sweep with his eye the houses on his side, now deserted by those who worshiped within the entrenched church, a large part of the Bellamy river and valley below, and the great bays beyond ; and a sentinel pacing to and fro in the southeastern corner could hold under his eye the houses on the Cocheco bank, a great length of the river itself and the Maine shore and region beyond. It would hardly be possible for the Indian, however stealthy his movements, to shoot his canoe along the river and fall upon the unprotected houses without calling to himself the attention of the watchful guard and evoking from him an outcry upon the congregation within. This entrenchment was built because of a new and most threatening danger. The settlers on Sunday mornings, when the bell began to ring, took down their guns, which hung on their household walls, and, putting themselves at the head

of their respective families, marched towards the Meeting-house on the hill. Arrived there, the guns were stacked in the rough entry. The sentinels were stationed on the outer walls. Worship began. The hymn, the prayer, the sermon was often broken in upon by the startling cry of the faithful watchmen. The guns were seized, and the men went forth to fight, and sometimes to die. There is an account here and there given of one and more shot down by the Indians, as they were going to or from the old Meeting-house.

I am not going to recount the horrors and atrocities of the four great Indian wars which well nigh depopulated Dover. Hundreds of brave men were killed. Women and children were driven off in herds to Canada. The laborer in the field was surprised and scalped. The wife, busy about her domestic affairs, and the child sweetly dreaming in its cradle, were seized. A thousand nameless horrors, whose recital would chill your blood, were here performed, making those who lived to envy the cruel lot of those who had died. In 1677 a peace between the Indians and the white men was declared. Twelve years of blessed quiet ensued. Meanwhile the inhabitants had moved more and more away from the original site. A mill and other buildings had sprung up around the falls at Cochecho, which was about four miles inland. The place is now the center of our present population and business. Near the banks of the river which now drives our greatest industry, there were built five garrison houses, the walls being of heaviest timber and the inner doors and the palisade-gates strongly bolted and barred. Into these fortified places, at sunset-hour, the neighboring families were gathered, and the watch was placed. Some years had elapsed since the last attack of the Indians upon the little settlement. The inhabitants

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were often meeting them with an unsuspecting confidence. The Indians were daily seen in their streets. They traded at their doors, and sometimes they lodged in their very houses. But time was only intensifying the Indians' hatred of Major Waldron. His act of treachery committed thirteen years before, by which four hundred of their number had been seized in a time of peace and sold into slavery, had not faded from their memory. They were familiarizing the white man with their presence in his streets and homes, and putting to rest his last suspicion, in order that the revenge which they were ever meditating might at last meet its full measure of blood.

One evening, in June of 1689, as the inhabitants were gathering into their garrisons, two squaws applied at each for a night's lodging. They were admitted. At midnight hour they opened the doors to the lurking savages without. The garrison of Major Waldron was the first thus surprised. The old hero of eighty years was roused from his deep sleep by the yell of the Indians who thronged his chamber. He sprang up, grasped his sword, and lay round about him with desperation and great effect. But a blow from behind sent him senseless to the floor. The savages seized him, drew him out into the hall, and, binding him fast in a chair, danced around him, and mockingly saluted him as judge. Then each cut his breast across with a knife, shouting out, "I cross out my account."*

So died a man who was a ruler among the men of his day, of strong, clear mind, flashing wit, fearless spirit, and giant strength; a man to whose bold enterprise, broad understanding, and tireless energy, Dover owes a vast debt of gratitude and praise.

*Belknap's Hist., pp. 126, 127.

In this attack twenty-three of the inhabitants were killed and twenty-nine were driven away as captives. The mills and most of the houses were burned.

For the next ten years, Dover was subject to an almost constant assault by the Indians. At other times, the great cold and the deep snow of winter had secured the distressed inhabitants a respite from their sufferings. But now that the Indians' revenge was seconded by popish enthusiasm, no winter could protect these frontier settlements from the remorseless foe. The terror and anguish of those years, when the very door-stones were stained with children's blood, when households were broken up, half their members, as captives, dragging their bleeding feet to Canada, and half lying in the peace of death, in the fields among the corn rows, or by the waters of the spring, where their wily enemy had waited patiently for their coming—the terror and suffering of those times, we, who lie down at night in an unbroken security, and go and come without a thought of fear, can in no way imagine.

The history of Dover and the history of the First Church, for a period in their existence, which covers nearly one hundred and forty years, are interwoven with each other. Indeed, they form an almost single and inseparable thread in the narrative. In the Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies, the State existed for the Church. If this can not be said of our Dover Plantation, it must be said that Church and State stood together in closest, and, for nearly a century and a half, in indissoluble union. At one time the minister of the church was governor of the plantation. The town records and the church records were one. The minister's salary and all church expenses, the building of Meeting-houses and parsonages were matters which were discussed

and voted upon in "publique Towne Meetinge" as much as were matters which pertain to the boundaries of neighboring towns, or to the rights and privileges belonging to the "Bever traid." It was not until 1762, during the ministry of Jonathan Cushing, the great grandfather of Peter Cushing, the present oldest deacon of the church, that the parish was incorporated distinct from the town. It is proper, then, that, before closing, I should gather up certain facts which otherwise might seem to belong exclusively to the history of this ancient church.

The massacre of Major Waldron and his associates by the Indians took place during the ministry of JOHN PIKE, who was the successor of the younger Reyner. The destruction of the mills and of the best houses at Cocheco checked for a time the current which was drawing to it the business and the population of the Neck. With the exception of the branch Meeting-house which had been built at Oyster River (Durham), the old church on the Neck was the only one in all the great territory which now includes Dover, Durham, Newington, Barrington and Somersworth. "Up to 1713, or thereabouts, the inhabitants of Somersworth were obliged to travel from five to eight miles to the church on Dover Neck."* The records of the times show that there were many and bitter controversies between the people who lived on the Neck and those living in the contiguous neighborhoods, touching this matter of church privileges and accommodations. During the ministry of NICHOLAS SEVER, who succeeded Mr. Pike, the population had so increased at the Cocheco Falls that a fresh difficulty broke out about a site for a new church. For the accommodation of

*New Hampshire Churches, p. 345. Somersworth.

people living here and at Madbury, Rollinsford and Somersworth, the town voted in 1714 to erect a Meeting-house on Pine Hill. The city of the dead, which now covers so great a surface of the hill, was once the little churchyard, where a few graves lay in the shadow of the old church walls. Services were still continued in the building on the Neck, but in 1720 it was abandoned. Its site was afterward occupied by a school-house. In 1758, during the ministry of JONATHAN CUSHING, the tenth minister, the fourth Meeting-house was erected. It held the site of this present one. This edifice, in which we are gathered to-day, is the fifth. It was completed and dedicated Dec. 30, 1829.

From this mother church have sprung the church at Newington, organized in 1715, the church at Durham in 1718, the church at Somersworth in 1730, now represented in the churches at Great Falls and Salmon Falls, the church at Barrington in 1755, and the Belknap church in this city, which was organized in 1856.

For two hundred years this church held within itself the entire ecclesiastical element of Dover. In 1824, the Methodist Episcopal church in Dover was formed. In 1825, the Universalist society in Dover and Somersworth was organized, and reorganized at Dover alone in 1837. In 1826, the first Freewill Baptist church was gathered. In 1827, the first Unitarian society was formed. In 1828, the Franklin Street Baptist church was organized. The Roman Catholics built their first church here in 1830. In 1839, St. Thomas church was organized. In 1840, the Washington Street Freewill Baptist church was formed.

With these few first chapters of the history of Dover, I must close the volume. To one of her own sons, who loves the very stones of her streets, and who knows her full his-

tory as well as any story of childhood, I leave the task of the completed narrative.*

And yet I may, in closing, call your thoughts away from these early days of the fathers' struggles and sufferings to days when their children and their children's children, even to our own time, renewed the old experience of tears and anguish. The heroic qualities which we have admired in those forefathers shone in undimmed luster in their sons, who, under the leadership of another Waldron, met a not less deadly foe on the battle-field of my own dearly loved State,† of New York, of Rhode Island, wherever northern men were marching and fighting through the years of the great Revolution. And those qualities of patriotism, loyalty, hatred of oppression, and brave fidelity which shrinks not from death, were transmitted in their unsullied brightness to fathers and sons of our days. The boys of Dover fell into the old line of duty where their fathers stood, and marched and fought with the old, unflinching heroism through the swamps and wildernesses where treason was crouching to throttle the nation. Many of them lie in unknown graves, beneath the sod which they crimsoned with their blood. Many of them lie on yonder hillside, amidst the scenes of the fathers' sufferings and trials. And we remain to hold them all, the fathers and the sons together, in one close, tender embrace of love; to celebrate their common virtues, and dedicate ourselves with a more solemn purpose to all that was grand and true in their lives and characters.

*By vote of the city Councils of the city of Dover, March 2, 1871, Dr. A. H. Quint was invited to prepare a full and comprehensive History of Dover. We are assured that Dr. Quint has this very important work in preparation.

†Bennington, Vermont.

The same current of time which has swept through these centuries of Dover's history, bearing on its bosom so many generations of men, is under us, sweeping us onward. There are duties for us to do. There are sacrifices for us to make. There is a nobleness of character and action for us to reach. Farther down this stream of time, there will be another gathering. The youngest living and those now unborn will meet to celebrate another stadium in Dover's history. We shall have been gathered to the fathers! What shall we have done to make that day more grateful to them? What virtues shall we have achieved, what work of beneficence or enterprise shall we have wrought out which shall call for richer garlands and wreaths and gladder songs and worthier speech than ours to-day? Blessed shall we be if those who are gathered then can say of us, as we to-day say in grateful memory of those who are gone, "THE GLORY OF CHILDREN IS THEIR FATHERS."

GODMAN

1881

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